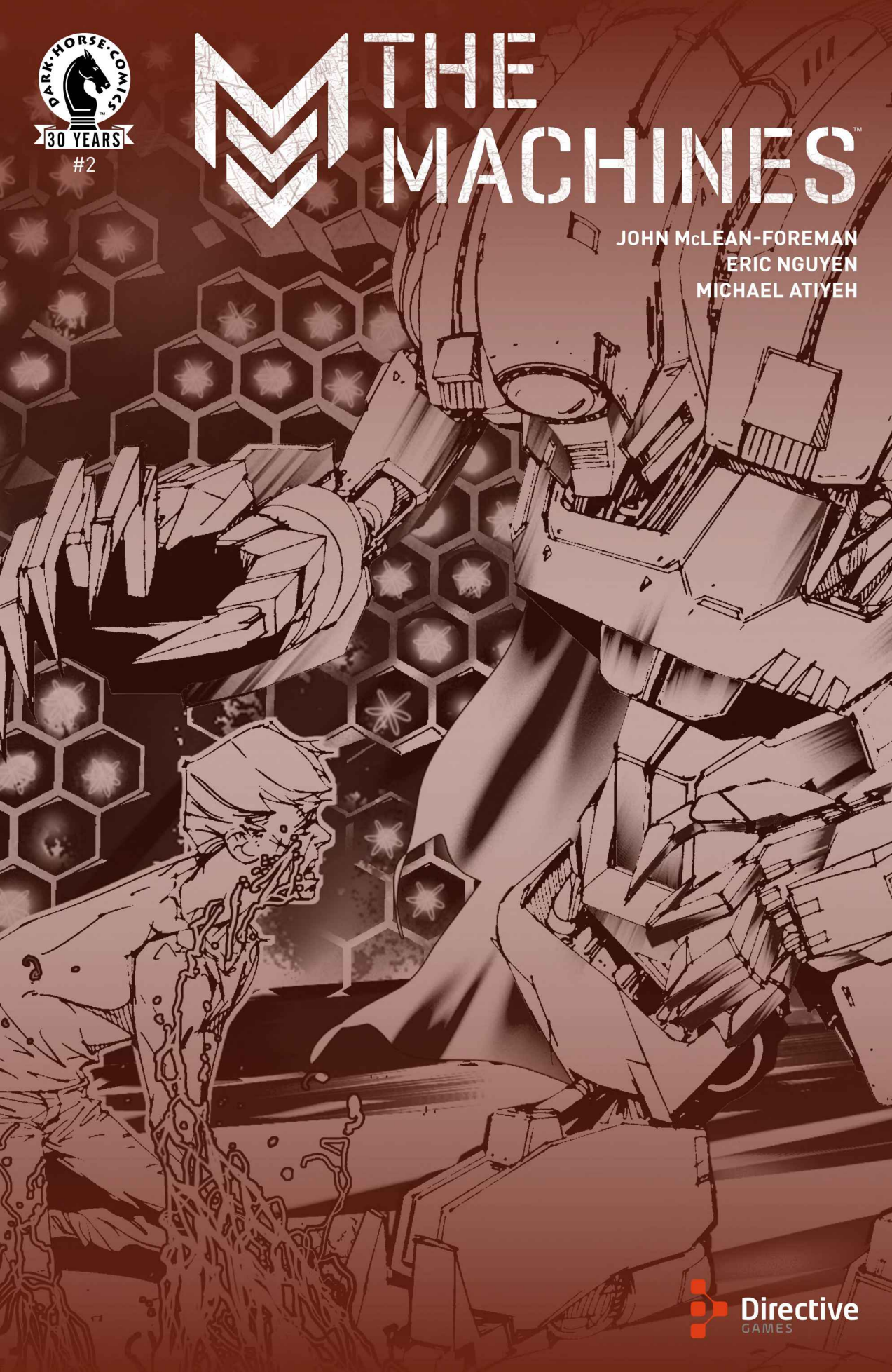
DARK HORSE COMICS
30 YEARS
#2
THE MACHINES™
JOHN McLEAN-FOREMAN
ERIC NGUYEN
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Directive
GAMES

THE MACHINES™

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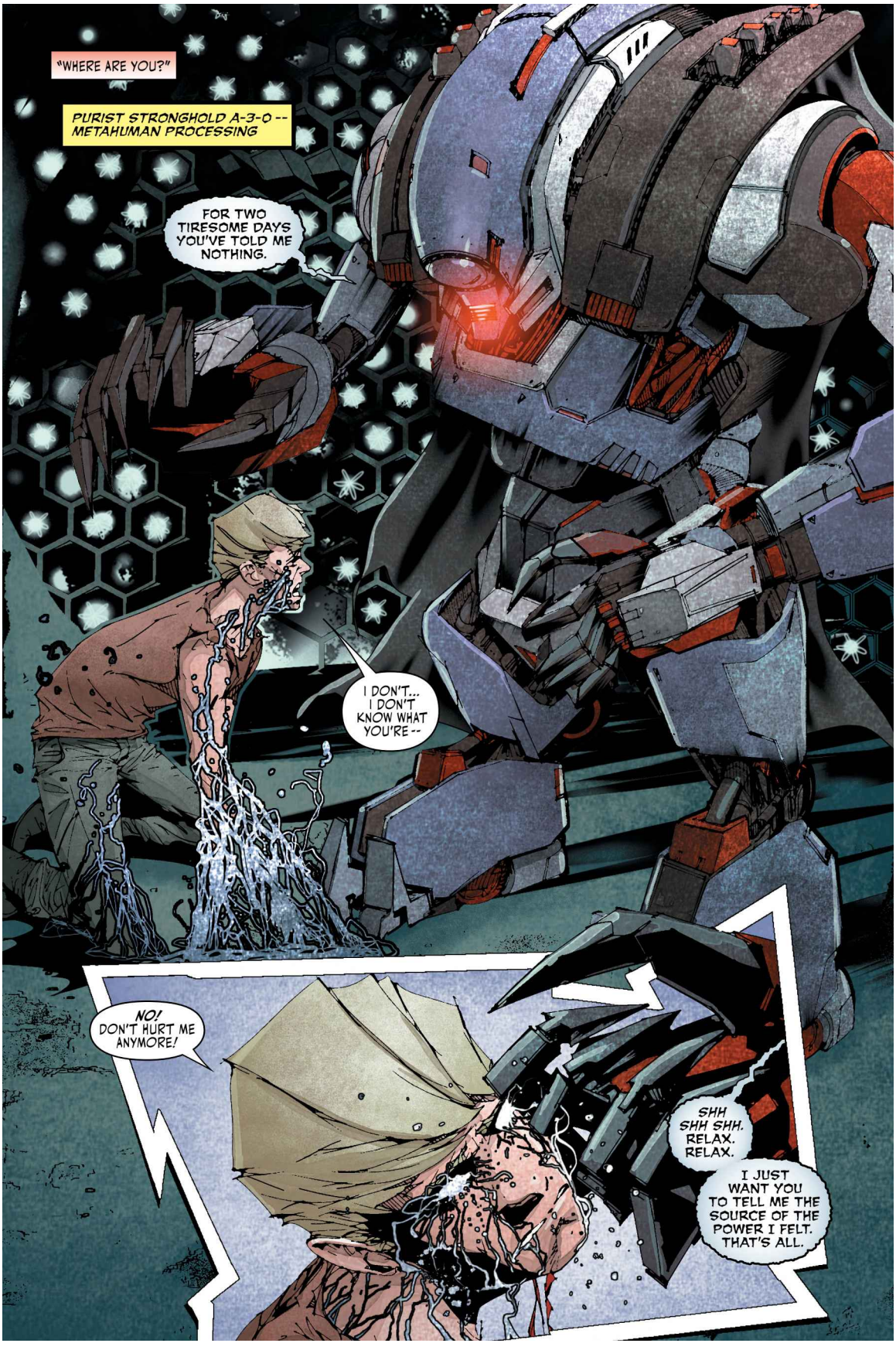
CRACCCK
DEAD RIVER SLAVE CAMP
IF YOU DON'T GET THESE TURRETS ONLINE AS OF YESTERDAY, YOU'RE GOING BACK IN THE SLAVE PENS.
YOU GET ME?
YES, BOSS.
I ALREADY LOST ONE METAHUMAN TO THAT ROBOT.
BOSS!
THE VID UPLINK IS STABLE. THE OTHER BOSSES ARE WAITING.
I'M NOT LOSING ANYTHING ELSE. NOT SLAVES. NOT MONEY. NOTHING!
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS A GOOD IDEA?
I'LL TELL YOU IN FIVE MINUTES.
LET'S GO, MAGGOTS! YOU HEARD HER! GET THESE GUNS UP!
CRACCCK

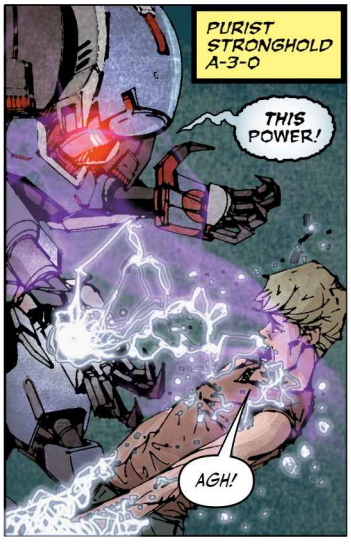
THANK YOU FOR COMI--
IS IT TRUE YOU'RE ARMING YOUR CAMP WITH ANTI-ROBOT WEAPONRY?
YES, BUT HEAR ME--
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?
YOU'RE RISKING OUR LIVES BECAUSE OF ONE ROBOT!
ONE ROBOT THAT CAN SURVIVE INSIDE THE NANO-STORMS.
IT HASN'T ATTACKED ANYONE EXCEPT YOU.
IF THE OTHER MACHINES FIND OUT WHAT YOU'RE DOING, THEY'LL KILL US ALL.
YOU'RE MISSING THE POINT.
THE ONLY REASON WE HAVE ANY FREEDOM AT ALL IS BECAUSE ROBOTS CAN'T WITHSTAND THE STORMS.
IF THIS THING GETS OUT AND TEACHES THE OTHERS HOW TO SURVIVE IN THEM...
YOU HAVE TO ARM YOUR CAMPS SO WE CAN BOX THIS THING IN AND KILL IT.
I HAVE ANOTHER IDEA. YOU DISARM YOUR CAMP.
DO IT OR WE'LL COME AND DO IT FOR YOU.
PTINK

YOU COWARDS.
WHAT?
YEAH. I'LL TELL HER.
BOSS, THE ROBOT JUST HIT ANOTHER CARAVAN.
GOD DAMN IT!
WHAT DID IT TAKE THIS TIME?
FOOD AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES.
WHAT THE HELL WOULD A ROBOT WANT WITH--
GET EVERYONE ARMED AND READY TO MOVE OUT.
THE GIRL'S ALIVE.

ELSEWHERE
HUHN? WAZ... WAZHAPNIN'?
UGH... THIS HURTS TOO MUCH FOR ME TO BE DEAD.
GNYAAA!
WHAT THE HELL?!
SHHLOP
GET OFF ME!
OH... OW.
OW!
OW!
RYK! HELP ME!
DYLAN?!
I CAN'T HOLD ON!
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
PLEASE!
WAIT. WAIT! DON'T GO!
COME BACK!
DYLAN!


"WHERE ARE YOU?"
PURIST STRONGHOLD A-3-0 -- METAHUMAN PROCESSING
FOR TWO TIRESOME DAYS YOU'VE TOLD ME NOTHING.
I DON'T... I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE --
NO! DON'T HURT ME ANYMORE!
SHH SHH SHH. RELAX. RELAX.
I JUST WANT YOU TO TELL ME THE SOURCE OF THE POWER I FELT. THAT'S ALL.

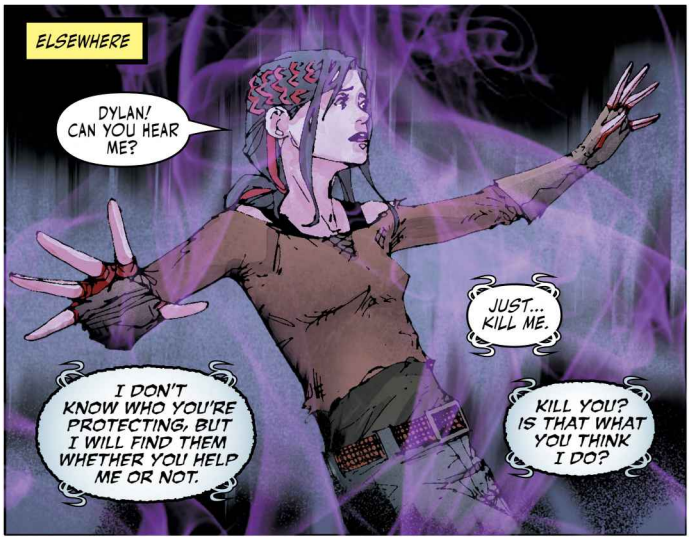
ELSEWHERE
WHAT POWER?
YOU'RE COVERED IN TRACES OF IT, DYLAN.
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
FOR THE LAST TIME...I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
NO! WAIT WAIT WAIT!


PURIST STRONGHOLD A-3-0
THIS POWER!
AGH!

WHAT DOES IT DO?
WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

I KNOW YOU'VE SEEN IT BEFORE!
I...I CAN'T...I CAN'T TELL YOU WHAT I DON'T KNOW.

HSSSS!
AGH!!!


ELSEWHERE
DYLAN! CAN YOU HEAR ME?
JUST... KILL ME.
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU'RE PROTECTING, BUT I WILL FIND THEM WHETHER YOU HELP ME OR NOT.
KILL YOU? IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK I DO?

BUT SINCE YOU WON'T TELL ME WHAT I WANT TO KNOW...
ELSEWHERE
DYLAN!
WHAT ARE YOU-- OH! OH NO!
STOP!
PURIST STRONGHOLD
FWOOOM
I'VE GOT YOU.
RYK?
HOW ARE YOU HERE?
HE WAS...HE WAS GOING TO --
SHH... IT'S OKAY. I WON'T EVER LET GO AGAIN.
INCREDIBLE!
SO, YOUR NAME IS RYK.
RYK, DON'T LET HIM TAKE ME.
YOU? YOU'RE NOTHING.

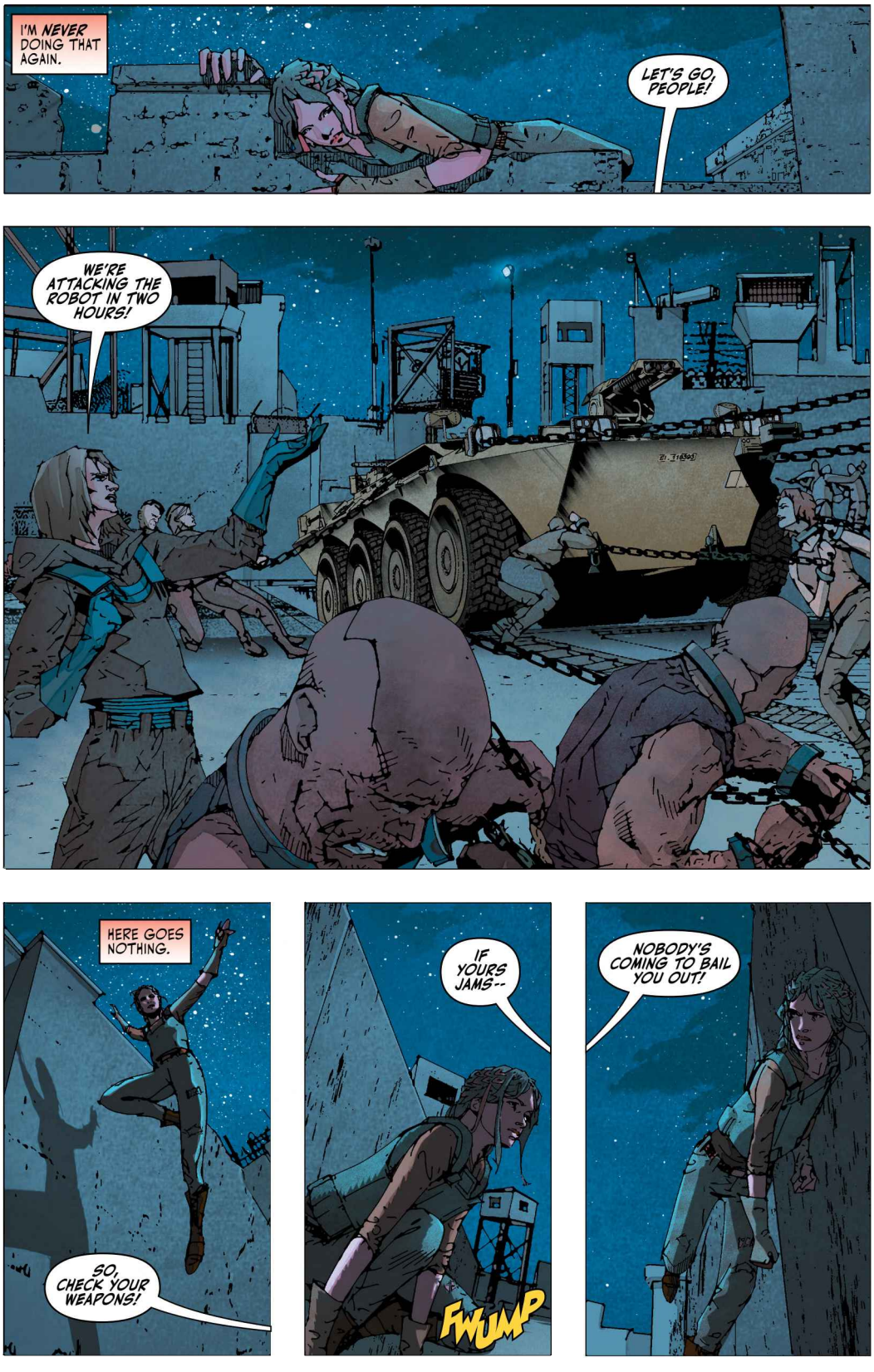
"SHE'S THE ONE I'M LOOKING FOR!"
AAAAHHH!!!
OH MY GOD.
I LEFT HIM BEHIND AGAIN.
NO. NOT REAL.
JUST A DREAM.
JUST A--
WELCOME BACK.
I WAS STARTING TO THINK THAT YOU WERE NEVER GOING TO WAKE UP.
AHH!!!
WHOA. WOW. I'M SORRY.
I SHOULD HAVE...WHAT'S THE WORD... UHH...THOUGHT OF THAT.
I'M... B...BRAVO ZULU.
SQUIRREL!
WAIT... THAT'S NOT RIGHT, IS IT?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

A LITTLE... UH... DAMAGE.
BUT YOU... H-HEALED ME.
I'M TRYING TO RETURN THE FAVOR.
UHM... I WASN'T SURE WHAT YOU WOULD NEED TO GET BETTER.
RIIIIIGHT.
LOOK. I APPRECIATE IT, BUT--
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I NEED TO FIND MY FRIEND.
BUT I'M YOUR FRIEND.
OH, THAT'S NOT GOOD. WHAT DO I SAY?
YE-E-E-ES. YES YOU ARE.
BUT MY OTHER FRIEND'S IN TROUBLE.
NO NO NO. YOU CAN'T GO.
I THINK MORE CLEARLY WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER.
OKAY, BUT-- WHOA.
HEY, CAREFUL. YOU'RE STILL A LITTLE WEAK.

ARE YOU OKAY?
SO COME WITH--
OW. OW.
YOU COULD MAKE THE SLAVERS--
OW.
MAKE THEM TELL ME WHERE...
WHERE DYLAN IS.
NO...I...
GAH!
RYK!
YOU THINK YOU CAN PROTECT THE BOY FROM ME?
YOU CAN'T EVEN PROTECT YOURSELF.
IT'S REAL?!
NO! NO!
NO!
RELEASE YOUR HOLD ON THE BOY!
I CAN FEEL IT...TWISTING INSIDE OF ME. SHOULD I LET DYLAN GO?
NO.

ARE YOU BROKEN?
YES.
NO. I'M FINE.
I HAVE TO GO FIND MY--
NO!
SORRY. SORRY. DIDN'T MEAN TO... UH... BUT I CAN'T LET YOU LEAVE.
YOU'LL BE SAFE HERE. WE HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED.
WOULD THAT BE SO BAD? I'VE NEVER BEEN SAFE ANYWHERE.
THIS GUY WILL PROTECT ME.
THERE'S ANOTHER MACHINE AFTER ME.
DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING I COULD USE?
LIKE WHAT?
YOU TELL ME.
YES, I'M SURE I CAN FIND A... AH, WHAT IS THE WORD?
LAST CHANCE, RYK.
YOU CAN BE SAFE HERE.
HANG ON, DYLAN. I'M COMING.

DEAD RIVER SLAVE CAMP
REAR WALL
I MUST BE OUT OF MY MIND.
WHAT WAS I THINK--AGGH!
NO NO. NOT NOW.
RYK!
NO!
OH MY GOD OH MY GOD OH MY GOD.

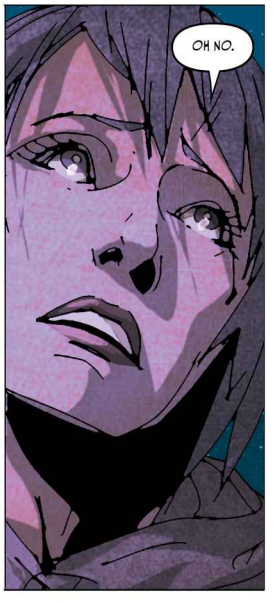

I'M NEVER DOING THAT AGAIN.
LET'S GO, PEOPLE!
WE'RE ATTACKING THE ROBOT IN TWO HOURS!
HERE GOES NOTHING.
SO, CHECK YOUR WEAPONS!
IF YOURS JAMS--
FWUMP
NOBODY'S COMING TO BAIL YOU OUT!

PLEASE BE UNLOCKED.
K-CHUK K-CHUK
FIGURES.
WELL, YOU DIDN'T COME UP THE BACK WALL JUST TO SEE ME.
DID YA THINK YOU WERE GONNA FIND YOUR LITTLE BOYFRIEND IN MY OFFICE?
WHERE IS HE?
YOU'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH.
TELL ME OR I'LL KILL YOU.

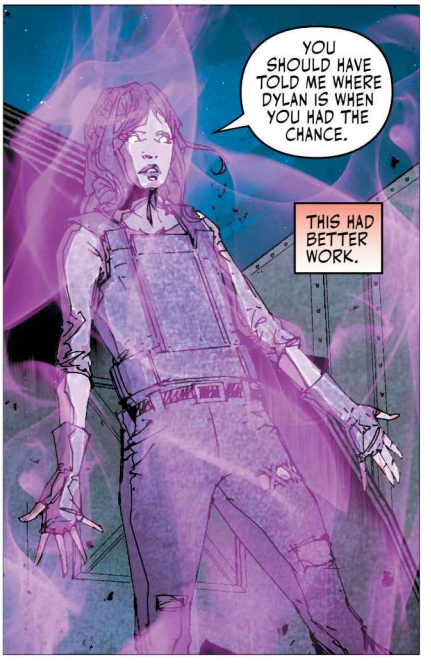
THE BALLS ON THIS KID.
I CAN'T TELL WHETHER I SHOULD BE RELIEVED OR DISAPPOINT--
UH...BOSS... SHE'S DOING THE GLOWING THING AGAIN.

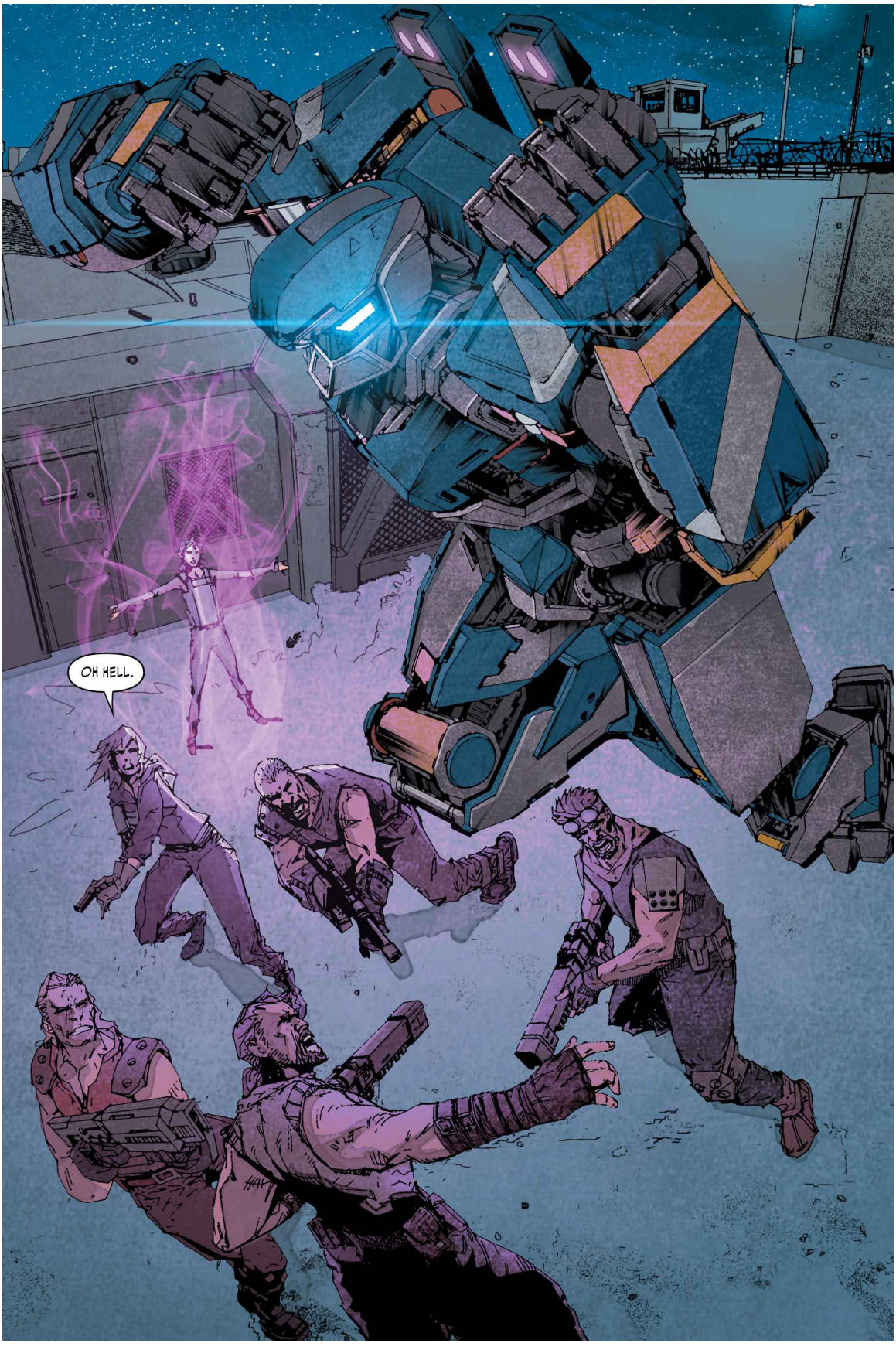
KNOCK IT OFF, KID!
YEAH? YOUR SHAKING HANDS SAY DIFFERENT.
I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU.
WHERE'S DYLAN?

STOP IT, KID. I KNOW YOUR POWERS DON'T DO ANYTHING.
YOU SURE?


OH NO.

SENTRY! WHADDA YA GOT?
NOTHING! THE DESERT'S EMPTY!
GET TO THE BACK WALL!
NOW!


YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME WHERE DYLAN IS WHEN YOU HAD THE CHANCE.
THIS HAD BETTER WORK.


OH HELL.